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BOOK REVIEWS

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Biodiversidade do Município de Sorocaba

Biodiversidade do Município de Sorocaba by W.S. Smith, V. D. Mota Jr. and J. L. Carvalho. 2014. Sorocaba: Prefeitura Municipal de Sorocaba. 272 pp. ISBN: 978-85-89017-02-0.

One of the major current challenges of our society is to conciliate biodiversity conservation and human population needs. Half of the world's population is currently living in urban centers and the prospect is that by 2030 this population will double. Accordingly, the relationship between biodiversity and human beings today is strongly connected to what happens in cities.

The city of Sorocaba is the fourth most populous in the countryside of São Paulo, with a population of more than 600,000 inhabitants. The newly created metropolitan region encompasses 26 cities. It has an area of 456.0 km², with 349.2 km² of urban area and rural area of 106.8 km². The city is an important industrial center in the state of São Paulo and Brazil.

The Secretary of Environment of the city of Sorocaba organized several workshops with 59 researchers from 12 national and international institutions under the theme "Biodiversity of the city of Sorocaba". The goal of this working group was to provide guidelines for environmental actions within the city. The results of it are available now in a recently released book (Biodiversidade da cidade de Sorocaba). The book brings about a compilation of studies carried out in the city that address not only biodiversity inventories, but also socio-environmental and legislation, priority areas for conservation and improvement of landscape connectivity. A PDF of the book is freely available on the web (http://www.meioambientesorocaba.com.br/Pagina.aspx?pg=87). The 14 chapters of the book provide an overview of the biodiversity of Sorocaba, addressing topics such as: legislation, forest remnants, with the identification of areas of high environmental value, surveys of flora and fauna, suggestions of public policies, and the role of the Zoological City Park "Quinzinho de Barros" in the conservation of animal biodiversity. Moreover, knowledge gaps that should be addressed in future research were identified. The way the information was generated and how the book was produced favored citizen's access, creating a survey instrument that could be used as reference by teachers, undergraduate students, new researchers, and new projects developed by local universities. Another important aspect addressed by the book was to provide guidelines for making the informative useful to a wider readership, strategies and environmental educational activities, besides public policies on biodiversity. This book contributes to the Environmental Education programs of the city, whose concept has been expanded. Its publication can improve Environmental Education programs in schools and city parks, in addition to providing the teacher local information for the development of projects. Educational campaigns were also developed to enhance population's knowledge of common species and inspire stewardship for biodiversity, popularizing scientific knowledge.

The knowledge about the flora and fauna is the starting point for the elaboration of public policies for the management and conservation of biodiversity. Therefore, the book represents a major source about the biodiversity of Sorocaba and a reference for future studies. It is also a baseline to facilitate decision making by public authorities.

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